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## THE NEW ORTHODOXY.

ORTHODOXY is the confidence that a certain proposition is right and that all other propositions which contradict it are wrong. Accordingly, orthodoxy, or rightness of opinion, is the natural aim of both science and religion, and what we need most in our churches, schools, and universities is genuine orthodoxy. But how shall we obtain it? Is not orthodoxy, perhaps, a *fata morgana*, an unsubstantial vision which eludes our groping hand and surrenders us to the illusion of blind faith? Indeed, it has come to pass in these days in which agnosticism is the fashionable philosophy of the time, that a religious indifference like a spiritual blight has taken a strong hold of the human mind so as to discredit any kind of orthodoxy, and the doctrine of the vanity of all faith, be it scientific or religious, has come to be recognised as the sum of all human wisdom. But the very existence of science plainly demonstrates that whatever errors we may have inherited from the scientists and the religious teachers of the past, we must never lose faith in the ideal of Orthodoxy, which implies that there is truth and error, that the truth is one and self-consistent, and that whatever conflicts with the truth is error. This is no denial of the theory of the relativity of knowledge, nor does it imply the assumption that a man can become omniscient; but in spite of the relativity of knowledge, and in spite of the insufficiency of our means of investigating all the details of the immeasurable universe, we must remain assured that man can discern between truth and error, he can solve the various problems with which he is confronted, and he can realise, at least in part, and step by step, the ideal of orthodoxy.

Science has made many new discoveries in this century and has

established truths which widen our spiritual horizon and deepen our philosophical understanding. Under these conditions it is but natural that our religious beliefs, too, will have to be revised and restated. They must be purified in the furnace of scientific critique, and I trust that thereby they will not lose in religious significance. On the contrary, they can only gain in every respect; and after the fusing and refining religion will be purer and shine brighter than ever.

There is no need either to defend or to denounce the old orthodoxy, but it is important to understand the nature of the ideal of orthodoxy and to propound on this basis a new conception of orthodoxy which is the only possible ground of a reconciliation of Religion with Science. Agnosticism will not save us, and blind faith has no warrant, but we must broaden both our science and our religion until our religion becomes scientific, and our science religious. On the one hand, we must scientifically and fearlessly investigate the eternal psychical, social, and cosmic facts upon which religion rests; and on the other hand, we must recognise the divinity of scientific truth, imbue it with religious devotion, and seek its religious significance.

How often has Religion been denounced in the name of Science as superstition, and how often has Science been pilloried in the name of Religion as ungodly and profane! Scientists may err and religious doctrines may be wrong, but Science cannot be anti-religious and Religion cannot be anti-scientific; for what is Science but the search for truth, according to the best, the most reliable, and most accurate methods of investigation, and what is Religion but the love of truth applied to practical life!

It is understood that we must be on our guard not to accept the opinion of a scientist as genuine Science, yet we should not denounce Science itself or the principles of Science. However much we may distrust the calculation of an example, and the logical conclusions of a syllogism, we cannot question the reliability of arithmetic or the trustworthiness of logic.

Such is the narrowness of our traditional conceptions of Science and Religion, that both are sought in their externalities. Religion

is defined as a belief in dogmas, or as worship of one or several gods, or as the practice of ceremonies, such as incense burning, baptising, and mass-reading, while Science is described as a mere collecting, classifying, and collating of facts. And it is noteworthy that there are scientists who misunderstand the spirit of Science and there are clergymen who have no idea of the meaning of religion. How is that possible? Indeed it is natural; for the routine workers in both fields are so preoccupied with the exact observation of their traditional practices that they become absolutely unfit to understand the significance of their professions in the universal economy of mankind.

And can there be any doubt about the cause of the conflict between a one-sided Science and a one-sided Religion? The cause of the conflict is on the one hand the paganism of those who, forgetful of the fact that dogmas are symbols, urge a belief in the letter, which inextricably implicates them more and more in absurdities until they begin to hate reason and decry the light of science because it blinds their eyes. On the other hand we are confronted with a lack of trust in truth that is widely spread among the men of science. There are many scientists who judge religious questions from their limited field of inquiry, and imagine that the lower spheres of nature are the whole of nature. Chemistry is expected to solve the problems of psychology, morality is subsumed under zoölogy, and science is identified with materialism. Man because he is an animal is supposed to be a beast. This is no exaggeration, for such and similar statements have been actually made by prominent naturalists. No wonder that, where such a confusion of thought prevails those who set their trust in the letter of their sacred traditions will glory in the bankruptcy of science as being the best evidence of the truth of religion, while science will fall a prey to agnosticism and pessimism. No lesser authority than Huxley pronounced the dreary theory that nature and the laws of nature, including the laws that govern the social relations of man, are intrinsically immoral.

Here is not the place to refute the self-contradictory argument of those who rejoice in the alleged bankruptcy of Science and vainly

attempt by logical fallacies to prove the fallaciousness of reason. Suffice it to say that the extinction of the light of Science will never make Religion brighter. The moon is better seen when the sun is hidden ; but if you extinguish the sun, even the moon will cease to shine. By rendering the Logos illogical, you not only make Science impossible, but also change Religion into the superstition of mere traditionalism. The acceptance or rejection of Science means the parting path between genuine Religion and superstition.

What is Science that, in the name of Religion, it should be abused and denounced? Science formulates the facts of our experience in natural laws ; it searches for and describes the eternal of nature. Thus science is the embodiment of the immutable world-order of the Logos that was in the beginning, of God in His revelation, and truly, "this is the stone which was set at naught of the builders, which is become the head of the corner." (Acts, IV., 11.)

Science offers a description of experience from which the purely subjective elements have been discarded. Science eliminates sentiment, passions, and prejudice, and undertakes to establish objective truth. Science drops the human of man ; it liberates him from the limitations of the senses, and reveals before his mental vision the secret inter-relation of cause and effect, and the order of immutable laws. In a word, Science is superhuman ; it is the Jacob's ladder, which at its bottom touches the world of sense, while its top reaches into the heaven of spirit.

Whenever God speaks to man, it is not in the earthquake of bigotry or dogma, nor in the fire of fanaticism, but he comes in the still small voice, and the still small voice is heard in Science, for Science is an utter surrender of what we wish to believe to a recognition of the actual fact. Science is a hushing of all thought of self, so as to give room to a calm contemplation of truth.

If you want a Religion that is truly catholic, let it be in accord with Science.

Catholic is that which is universally acceptable, and what is more catholic than Science? For the establishment of a Catholic Religion, therefore, we must select the objectivity of scientific truth as the cornerstone. This and nothing else is the eternal Logos

which is exemplified in the noble lives of the prophets, and the incarnation of which constitutes the sonship of God. This and nothing else is the basis of Religion ; and no man can lay another foundation.

Science is sometimes erroneously supposed to be a human invention ; it is represented as the truth of man, which is contrasted to the divine revelation of religious dogmas as being the truth of God. But Science is not of human make ; Science cannot be fashioned by man as he pleases ; Science is stern and unalterable ; it is a revelation which cannot be invented but must be discovered. There is a holiness in mathematics, and there is ethics in the multiplication-table. On the other hand, dogmas such as the various churches have formulated as their platforms, are the expressions of human opinions. They have been framed by the religious leaders of the past and have been accepted or rejected through majority decisions of so-called œcumenical councils. They are, I grant, sacred documents of what our ancestors thought to be the truth ; they have been cast in the mould of mighty personalities, but they are merely a reflexion of the spirit of their age, including all its noble aspirations and shortcomings.

Our traditions and the formulations of belief, as set forth in the Credos of former centuries, are unquestionably important statements ; they must be considered and reconsidered, and are in a sense authoritative, as coming from men whom we respect, but they are not a final decision of all problems ; they possess no absolute authority and can bind neither our reason nor our conscience. It is our sacred duty to revise them again and again in the light of that direct revelation of truth which is always and constantly accessible to man. Man can find salvation only through a scrupulous self-examination and a right comprehension of the events of life.

If you find traditional formulations of faith acceptable, let them stand on the same principle as scientific truths. Scientific truths are always liable to revision, and no scientist makes the slightest objection to having his propositions revised. Why should theologians do so? Scientific truths once rightly formulated need shun no criticism,

since upon re-examination they will be corroborated; and, if they be misunderstood or forgotten, they can be rediscovered.

Science, it is true, appears as an enemy of the old dogmatism, which to the unthinking made religion easy. Science discredits blind faith and rejects the trust in the letter. It may destroy many long-cherished prejudices that have become dear to us. But if a dogma cannot stand scientific criticism, if it is not true, how can it comfort us? Let a dogma that is untrue go, and have trust in truth. The truth, whatever it be, let us be assured, will be the best. Truth is better than the most beautiful dream, and, if truth appears bitter at first sight, let us be patient. If Science destroys, it is sure to give us something better.

While dogmas, viz., the platforms of the various churches, are man-made, we should not forget that they nevertheless reflect the truth of a revelation that is superhuman. They may not be true in their letter, yet are they full of meaning. The truths of this meaning appear in a new light with every advance of civilisation and will be better understood at every stage reached by Science. Let us always bear in mind that Religion, although it must be one with Science, is not Science; the province of Religion is the broad field of practical life, and its aim is to teach moral truths to the masses, not by proving them in logical deductions, but by explaining them in allegories, and the symbolic nature of ecclesiastical dogmas has never been doubted except by the most narrow-minded dogmatists. The Church actually calls the confession of faith a "symbolum," and Christ declared that he spoke in parables only. It is a perversion of the fundamental meaning of our religious revelation to demand a belief in the letter where confessedly from the beginning nothing but a symbolic expression of a deeper mystery was offered?

Neither the prophets, nor Christ, nor the apostles ever intended to set up a system of revelation that should be contrary to Science. It is true that they proclaimed many truths which the sages of their time did not grasp,—love of enemies and charity; but a deeper comprehension of the facts of life proved that, upon the whole, their ethical injunctions were right in spite of their apparent impracticability.

Let us not be afraid to analyse religion. Do not think that if the nature of the symbol is explained, nothing will be left. If the myth is understood, we become acquainted with the truth itself, which we formerly had merely seen as through a glass, darkly, in the tinsel deckings of poetic imagery.

Authority is sometimes contrasted with Argument, and the weight of a name is proffered to check the boldness of progressive thought. But there is no sense in speaking of Authority as opposed to Reason; for if by Authority is meant the confidence which we have in a person, what is it but our respect for the soundness of his judgment? Indeed, there is no authority of person; all authority is ultimately the authority of provable truth; it is the authority of Science, and rests upon the superpersonal authority of the divine Logos.

To praise Authority at the expense of Science and Reason is like accepting a greenback and repudiating the gold which the greenback represents. An unredeemable greenback is a mere scrap of paper, and authority not based upon experience that can critically be tested and verified by renewed experience, is a mere usurpation of power. There is no genuine authority which when analysed is not reducible to experience, and as science is systematised experience, we should think that there is no sense in the contrast between Science and Authority.

While we must insist on the recognition of the authority of Science, we should not be blind to the great preference of Religion in having been the first to point out that justice is more powerful than violence, and charity stronger than vengeance. At present, Religion being naturally conservative is lagging behind Science, but there was a time when Science was lagging behind Religion. Religious prophets have in former ages propounded moral ideals, sternly demanding their practical application, the rationality of which the scientists of the time were not sufficiently advanced to prove. Religion anticipated many moral truths which modern Science is only now beginning to understand. When commending Science as the ultimate criterion of truth, let us not forget the great service which Religion rendered while Science was still in its swaddling clothes!



To sum up : any faith that is irreconcilable with Science is doomed. He who rejects Science blights the life of Religion. For the spirit of genuine Religion is the same as the spirit of genuine Science. Science is a divine revelation. Contempt for science and a deliberate suppression of reason is an intellectual sin ; it is the sin against the spirit which cannot be forgiven, but must, if persisted in, ultimately lead to eternal perdition.

Therefore, what we need most dearly is Orthodoxy, but let our Orthodoxy be genuine.

EDITOR.